

# St. Matthew Today

Wed., Dec. 13th, 2023

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 126<sup>th</sup> year

## Advent Three

### Friday's Word

I just turned 81.  
(Yes! I know! I don't look a day over 80!)  
And on Jan 21, I will celebrate my 42nd year as pastor of St. Matthew.  
So—how did that happen?!?  
Well, in 1982, I was a 29-yr-old theology student beginning a second career after teaching.  
I needed a church to serve while in seminary. And there was this small, dying church nobody wanted to be sent to. St. Matthew.  
A church off the main drag. No prospects.  
I was sent there to close it down—pronounce the “last rites,” so to speak.  
But it didn't die. It began to grow.  
By 1989 we were out of room. We had a building program to transform the sanctuary into the glory it is now.  
Since I presided over an unlikely recovery, the bishop let me stay. Many bishops let me stay. Having this continuity is what has preserved a church that seemed to have no future.  
That—and this. This thing you are reading.  
In 1987, we began these “little articles” in papers.  
Some 90% of our members come through Friday's Word.  
And everyone knows what they are getting before they get here.  
We attract loving and accepting people.  
And by the way—I ain't done yet. I am as excited about ministry as the day I first stepped into a pulpit.  
And Christmas at St. Matthew will be glorious.  
The Christmas Show is this Saturday night—the 16th—at 6:00. It's kind of like an old Bing Crosby TV special.  
Great music.  
Christmas supper after.  
And Santa for the kids.  
And Sunday morning?  
I'm still preaching.

*God Bless—MB*

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#### The Christmas Show

Expect it to be great fun.  
Like a TV Christmas Special.  
I love the music we are doing.  
We close with great old carols and modern Christmas classics.  
Blake sings “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day.”  
Shannon sings “Breath of Heaven.”  
I sing—well—let's have some surprises.  
You KNOW it is Saturday at 6:00.  
Christmas Dinner provided after — please bring a dessert!  
And Santa.

#### Third Sunday of Advent

Sermon: “At the Right Time.”  
Scripture Galatians 4:4-5  
We remember Eloise Rhodes with love.  
She was a St. Matthew treasure.

GOD BLESS—MB



# Mary's Corner

Greetings in the name of Christ. In this season of Advent, I continue to be amazed at the way God works in our lives, showing up in the stillness. I attended a play on Sunday afternoon at the Stage West Theatre in Fort Worth. The play, "Poor Clare," is a brilliant social commentary set against the backdrop of the friendship between Saint Francis of Assisi and Chiara Offreduccio (aka Saint Clare of Assisi).

The play is described as, "what happens when your eyes are opened to the injustice of the world around you, and you cannot look away." I can verify that the play had exactly this impact upon the audience, at least this member of the audience. Having just preached a sermon on a "just peace," my heart was already diligently seeking a place for words to become action. The play, set in ancient times but using modern dialogue, is incredibly accurate in its portrayal of the awakening of a soul to the plight of others.

It was a lovely and spiritual experience, and I am grateful for the talent and for the message. My eyes see the world more deeply after seeing the play. If you have an opportunity, it is worth the time and money to see this play.

Advent is moving quickly along. I urge you to spend time every day acknowledging the hope you have in your heart and seeking justice and peace in this world gone mad. We do not have to change the entire world; just a few just things done by people living the gospel is all the world needs.

I look forward to seeing you on Saturday night at the Christmas Show and the dinner afterward. It promises to be a fun evening. Bring a friend, bring a stranger, bring both!

Blessings to all of you! Mary  
pastor@saintmatthewumc.com

## **The Christmas Show**

**Saturday, December 16th at 6:00 p.m.**

Dinner provided after the show. Please bring a dessert. Santa will be there, will you?

## **Chair Yoga**

Join your friends at our free Chair/ Standing Yoga class each Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10 a.m.

## **Sunday Breakfast**

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for a light breakfast each Sunday at 10 a.m. while the kids are in Sunday School.

# Kids' News

This week, we looked at Jesus' birth from Joseph's perspective as we continue our celebration of Advent. Like Mary, Joseph heard about Jesus' coming from an angel. Joseph had learned that his wife-to-be was expecting. Joseph was thinking of quietly calling off their marriage because he didn't want to embarrass Mary. Then an angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him that the child Mary was going to have come from the Holy Spirit, and that Joseph should not be afraid to marry her. The angel even told Joseph that the child would be a son and that the child's name would be Jesus. When Joseph woke up from this dream, he did just as the angel told him and married Mary.

By naming Jesus, Joseph was officially accepting Jesus as his son. He willingly raised and cared for Jesus. Joseph listened and did as God asked and, because he obeyed, he was filled with the joy of having a son and celebrating, with Mary, the birth of Jesus.

We need you all to be like Joseph and come to our Christmas program at church Saturday, December 16. We will have a wonderful evening filled with wonderful music, a wonderful dinner and if we are lucky, a visit from Santa. Please help us make sure our little ones are all in church that evening to visit with this jolly ole elf!! We will see you in church!

Blessings  
Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

## **Give to Saint Matthew UMC**

Please feel free to contribute in any way you can and help us in our efforts to continue spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the community and the world.

Scan the QR code with your phone to securely give online or visit our website at  
[saintmatthewumc.com/give](http://saintmatthewumc.com/give)

